39: Bernatzik--292 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
Akha A04
Miao AE5

/216 cont./

A M 782 764 114 Indochina slaughter six buffalo when a chief dies and two upon the death of a common man. Scott (2) reports that upon the death of

2. Page 275.

an Akha five buffalo are killed. Unfortunately, however, in all the cases it is not apparent whether these are sacrifices or merely roasted meat for the survivors and guests, or both.

M 114 ●266 782 A [782] Like the Meau, the Akha, too, do not know human sacrifice or the offering of human flesh. The statement in the old Chinese literature (3) that the Meau eat their slain enemies raw,

3. Album Gotha, No. 38.

as well as the general remark (4) that cannibalism occurs, prob-

4. Eberhard, II, p. 266.

ably has nothing to do with sacrifice or religion. In my opinion the Chinese authors simply wanted to impute to their mortal enemies a crime which is particularly wicked in the eyes of the Chinese.

A 825 178 [782] Among the Akha there is a noteworthy custom of taking the skull and lower jaw of certain animals taken while hunting, such as bear, muntjac, and wild pig, and fastening them for the house spirit in front of his little niche between the two rooms of the dwelling (see section, "Deities and Spirits," of the present chapter). In some places among the Akha one finds rows of monkeys' skulls nailed to the roofs. Today the Akha explain this custom as an attempt to beautify the dwelling of the house spirit and sometimes the house itself. The question was sometimes answered: "We do this because our ancestors did it." In other words, tradition was given as the reason for the custom. A [727] [174] Might this perhaps be a relic of a lost head-hunting cult? The taboo on killing the hornbill, which will be mentioned later, likewise points in this direction.

39: Bernatzik--503 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
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Chapter 18

Food and Stimulants

a) Food

262 In addition to the plants and animals mentioned in the preceding chapter, a great assortment of plants and roots from the primeval forest furnishes food for the Meau. One can say that the Meau eat the plants that they know and that bring no harm to the body. The Meau are positively eager to find out [824] which plants and fruits can be used by them. When, on their migrations, they come across a plant as yet unknown to them, leaves are immediately torn off, the fruits are smelled, and there is a discussion about how they could be used. The taste which the Meau develop in this way does not by any means correspond to our European taste, and they often consumed with obvious relish fruits of forest trees which were completely unpalatable to my European taste. The same can be said of the animals which are eaten. Even the civet cat, to whose meat a penetrating odor clings, is eaten, as well as beetle larvae, turtles, frogs, and toads. Besides the honey of wild bees, their larvae and pupae, as well as those of wasps and hornets, are eaten, and the latter two are even regarded as delicacies. In contrast, it is strange that all lizards, which occur in great numbers in northern Thailand, are disdained, whereas other [171] peoples settled there, the Lawa for instance, eat them with [266] passion. Among the things that are not eaten by the Meau are also snakes, worms, and human flesh. On the other hand, literally all the birds that the Meau are able to catch are eaten.

252 This wide selection of basic material is matched among [515] the Meau by the many ways of preparation. In this they are thoroughly clean, which is in strong contrast to the condition of the kitchens and houses. As /373/ a rule, it is the women, [462] who occupy themselves with the preparation of meals; if there is much work to be done, however, or if the women cannot do it for other reasons, say, pregnancy or childbirth, the men, too, occasionally cook.